

SENATOR CHRIS LAUZEN

SB600: The People Choose - Senator Chris Lauzen

www.lauzen.com

As citizens of a great democracy, we are inheritors of a sacred tradition based upon one-person-one-vote. Battles have been fought and victories won to protect our right to choose our leaders. This right extends to the many, not to just a favored few.

People complain about corruption and incompetence in Illinois politics. Some actually move to the next constructive step of figuring out what action all of us need to take in order to restore integrity and accountability.

For those like me who believe that traditional Republican philosophy is much more likely to fulfill the original promise of the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution and for those who vote in Republican primaries, **reform begins in our own ranks**. In order for Republicans to reattach to our grassroots, all of us need the power to directly vote for the leadership of our Party. That is what SB600 does.

SB600 enjoyed unanimous support in Senate Committee and passed the Senate 56 to 0, including the "yes" votes of all Republican State Central Committeemen who are also senators, i.e. Senators Kirk Dillard, Bill Peterson and Dave Syverson. I am grateful to all these senators for their "yes" votes.

Currently, only precinct committeemen can vote directly for state central committeemen in the Republican Party. My wife, Sarah, is our neighborhood's precinct committeeman and under SB600 she will continue to have a vote for leadership. However, there are approximately 150 other loyal Republicans in our neighborhood who don't have this right under current law, including me! I literally love my precinct committeeman. She does a great job. But I still want a vote. How 'bout you?

An open election gives regular voters direct control of our Party's direction. If the grassroots believes reform is necessary, then they are empowered by SB600 to vote reform. That may be why Republican grassroots organizations like Illinois Family Institute, Family Taxpayers Network, and Illinois Center-Right Coalition have all voiced their strong support.

It has been a bad idea, that has yielded dismal current results, to restrict universal one-person-one-vote suffrage. When powerful Republican Party leaders call me and complain, "But Chris, I'll have to run for the office that I hold...", I think, "What a good suggestion!"

SB600 will create an incentive for ambitious Party leaders to travel their districts and meet regular folks. The experience will be valuable and the lessons learned will assist them in governing the Party. Under this bill, Party officials and Precinct Committeemen retain their right to vote for the State Central Committeemen. Only now, rank-and-file voters will have a direct voice in the decision. An insular Republican Party is a disservice to all of us and an impediment to real reform.

When Tocqueville wrote *Democracy in America* he noted a stunning fact. As the outcome of the Revolution became apparent, resistance to democratic causes shrank considerably among those most likely to lose their stranglehold on power. Authority figures, whose interests were impaired by the passage of democratic laws, were suddenly seeking the will of the people and voting for democratic laws. Nobody wants the reputation as the last person to wring power from the hands of the people.

Call to Action: SB600 rests in the Rules Committee of the Illinois House of Representatives. The original official sponsor was Tom Cross. He has shifted sponsorship to Representative "Skip" Saviano who has now been joined by my intended House sponsor, Terry Parke.

I ask you to call your local representative to ask him/her to join this effort as co-sponsor. (Who could refuse to give you the right to vote for your Party leadership?) If you don't know who your representative is call Leslie at 217-782-0052 and she'll help you. Contact: Frances Sheffer at 630-264-2419